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Hoppin' down the money trail....

Here comes state Treasurer Dean Martin, dispensing Easter goodwill to the gov....or at least Easter goodies.



At the end of a testy week, Martin sent an Easter basket to the governor to have a little fun with their dustup over the condition of the state budget.

Martin, as you'll recall, held a news conference at which he announced the state was five weeks away from not having money in its checking account to cover state spending. Unless, of course, a deal to close the \$1.2 billion deficit in the state budget is reached.

That deal is precisely what Gov. Janet Napolitano and legislative leaders are working on, behind closed doors. She didn't appreciate the interference from Martin, calling him a "side player" and a "chicken little" for leading people to believe the state is running out of money.

The Easter basket included a package of Peeps and, ahem, a DVD of the Chicken Little movie.

Hmmm.....maybe the gov will put the Peeps in a jousting tournament, courtesy of the Ninth Floor microwave. She has discussed the fine points of the sport, in which two Peeps are positioned opposite each other, toothpick/lance tucked under a wing, and go at it while the microwave blows them up to gargantuan proportions before one pops the other into a molten mass.

Maybe those Peeps could be labeled "Martin" and "Napolitano" or perhaps "spending cuts" and "bonding."

Martin said his gift Peeps were green — a sign, perhaps, of a positive cash balance? — but added there might be red Peeps in the offing in late April.

And not to put too fine a point on their dustup, but Martin couldn't help but include this observation: "I hate to spoil the end of the movie, but Chicken Little was right!"